

Appln No. 10/791,715
Amdt. Dated March 10, 2005
Response to Office Action of January 01, 2005

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Examiner's first Office Action of January 26, 2005 the Applicant submits the accompanying Amendment to the specification and claims and the below Remarks directed thereto.

Claims 1-6 are currently pending in the present application. In the Amendment:

page 1 of the specification is amended at the "Cross-Reference to Related Applications" section to insert --, now U.S. Patent No. 6,712,924, which is a continuation application of United States application no. 09/721,856 filed 11/25/2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,530,339--, after "04/22/2002" as suggested by the Examiner;

independent claim 1 is amended to clarify that in the binding assembly of the claimed invention the sheets are fed from an adhesive applicator onto the floor of the support structure, that wall is arranged to allow a pocket of air to be caught under each sheet before the sheet comes to rest on the floor or the previously stopped sheet, that the vibration imparting mechanism vibrates the support structure so as to align the leading edges of the sheets as each sheet comes to rest on the previously stopped sheet, and that the binding mechanism presses on the aligned leading edge of each sheet such that the sheets are adhered together with the strips of adhesive. Support for these amendments can be found at page 10, line 26-page 11, line 27 of the present specification;

dependent claims 2-6 are unchanged; and

new dependent claim 7 is added specifying that the adhesive is a two-part adhesive. Support for new claim 7 can be found at page 10, lines 7-20 of the present specification.

It is respectfully submitted that the above amendments do not add new matter to the present application.

Priority

It is respectfully submitted that the above-described amendment to page 1 addresses the Examiner's concerns regarding the benefit claim of the present application to the prior applications, USSNs 10/126,676 and 09/721,856.

35 U.S.C. 103(a) Rejections

It is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of amended independent claim 1, and claims 2-6 dependent therefrom, is not taught or suggested by Johnson (USP 2,650,109), in view of Taillie (USP 3,794,550), for at least the following reasons.

In the present invention, as a first sheet 11 is fed to tray 18 from adhesive application station A it catches a pocket of air beneath it as it leading edge 28 strikes wall 31 of the tray 18. The vibrations of the tray 18 caused by vibrator 19 results in the sheet 11 coming to rest with the leading edge 28 positioned adjacent corner 23 of the tray 18 (see Figs. 8-10 of the present application). Subsequent sheets 11 are positioned and aligned in the same manner so as to come to rest upon the first sheet 11 (see Figs. 11-13).

In this way, the leading edges 28 are able to be properly aligned with minimal contact of the adhesive strips 17 before alignment. Binding press 20 is operated to press these aligned leading edges 28 of the sheets 11 to adhere the adhesive strips 17 together (see

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page 10, line 26-page 11, line 27 and Figs. 14-16 of the present application). Independent claim 1 has been amended to more clearly recite these features of the present invention.

On the other hand, as the Examiner admits, Johnson merely discloses an apparatus for aligning and sorting sheets of paper and does not teach or suggest applying adhesive to the sheets or providing a binding assembly to adhere the sheets together. That is, Johnson merely discloses a vibrator 60 which is used to align the sheets of paper positioned on a deck 20 or a hopper 100. The hopper 100 has a base member 101 and aligning fences 102,103 which the Examiner constitutes as the floor, support structure and wall of the claimed invention, respectively (see col. 11, lines 1-12 of Johnson).

However, the aligning fences 102,103 of Johnson are not a wall which defines a stop for the sheets being fed in the context of the claimed invention. This is because, the aligning fences 102,103 of Johnson are not arranged to allow a pocket of air to be caught under each sheet before the sheet comes to rest on the floor or the previously stopped sheet as in amended independent claim 1, rather a stack of the paper is placed directly on the hopper 100 by a user (see col. 12, lines 26-63 of Johnson). Even though Johnson provides a vibrator 60 which "jogs" the sheets of paper in such a stack to align them against the aligning fences, Johnson does not address the problem of properly aligning individual sheets of paper which have adhesive applied thereto so that a binding mechanism may properly bind the sheets into a bound document.

Further, even though Taillie discloses an arrangement comprising platens 46 and 48 for binding sheets together, Taillie does not otherwise make up for the above-described deficiencies in Johnson. This is because, the "adhesive stripe" used in Taillie in binding area 14 of paper sheets 12 is fusible xerographic toner 18 which is only fused together by the application of both heat and pressure which the platens 46 and 48 are used to provide (see col. 3, lines 48-66 and col. 6, lines 5-43 of Taillie).

Taillie does not teach or suggest that each sheet 12 is to be fed to a hopper, such as that in Johnson, so as to strike a wall arranged to allow a pocket of air to be caught under each sheet before the sheet comes to rest on the floor or the previously stopped sheet. Nor does Taillie teach or suggest that a vibrator, such as that in Johnson, is to be arranged so as to vibrate the hopper to align the leading edges of the sheets 12 as each sheet comes to rest on the previously stopped sheet, to thereby minimise the contact of the fusible xerographic toner 18 in the binding areas 14 of each sheet before being aligned. This is because, such considerations are not necessary with the fusible xerographic toner 18 of Taillie which only becomes an "adhesive" once sufficient heat is supplied thereto.

Thus, the subject matter of amended independent claim 1, and claims 2-6 dependent therefrom, is not taught or suggested by Johnson or Taillie either taken alone or in combination.

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It is respectfully submitted that all of the Examiner's rejections have been traversed. Accordingly, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Very respectfully,

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